

Old Family Skeletons Rattle in "Stepping Stones" at National

Louis K. Anspacher's Latest Is Stage Sermon Without Rant and Hypocrisy of Some Pulpits—Kathlene MacDonnell and Nana Bryant Sure Hits.

By LOUIS ASHLEY.

A. L. Erlanger presented Henry Miller's Theater company in "Stepping Stones," a drama by Louis K. Anspacher, at the National last night.

THE CAST:
Lloyd Mary Elizabeth Forbes
Dr. Jean Favel Pedro de Cordoba
Geraldine Duquesne Nana Bryant
Robert Sinclair Warburton Gable
Frederick Carhart A. E. Anson
Elinor Wyndham Kathlene MacDonnell
Frederick Spencer Frederick Lloyd
Mrs. Mildred Dunham Phyllis Fovah
Mrs. Robert Sinclair Marie Madden
Paul Favel Malcolm Fassett

There is so much good in the worst of us and so much bad in the best of us that it hardly behooves any of us to talk about the rest of us, as "Stepping Stones" proves rather conclusively. But it required considerable of a wrench before Dr. Jean Favel assimilated his own pet theories. He had to discover a skeleton in his own closet before he could sympathize with other skeletons. And, at the very end, with the curtain slowly descending, there was some doubt that he really understood the working effectiveness of his own theories. There was a rather detached air about him as he continued his dictation with "from my own experience."

It is all about the so-called double standard of morality, once a thrilling topic of discussion, now rather shopworn. But there is a twist to it here. It is rather the attitude of the erring woman upon her future, whether she should admit her moral defeat and slide down, or with Tennessee "rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to better things."

Dr. Favel is aglow with his great scheme for rebuilding the lives of the erring. He would enable them to recover and live "happy and useful lives." That is his theory behind the plans for building his sanatorium. And right here we see several women who are in need of just such ministrations.

First and foremost there is Mrs. Mildred Dunham, a pretty little widow, whose name is being coupled with Robert Sinclair's in various escapades. Then there is Geraldine Duquesne, whose platonic relationship with Frederick Spencer, has continued for some eight years or so. And, lastly, there is Elinor Wyndham who has finally ended a certain clandestine relationship with Sinclair.

Mrs. Dunham, flighty thing, is about to be named as co-respondent in Mrs. Sinclair's suit for divorce. The evidence gathered by an unscrupulous lawyer is threatening trouble when Mrs. Sinclair is killed in a motor car accident. All might have been well had the attorney not been unscrupulous.

Finding a chance to blackmail others, Carhart, the lawyer, proceeds to get to work. It is his prying fingers which disarrange the skeletons in at least two closets, Mrs. Dunham's and Miss Wyndham's. He fails in his object, but he fails only because Elinor, now Dr. Favel's wife,

has the strength of character to "rise on stepping stones" of her own dead self to better things.

Kathlene MacDonnell's Elinor is smooth and convincing. Especially good is she in her big scene with Carhart. She quite dwarfs her physician-husband, who becomes as part of the scenery. Perhaps there was nothing else for him to do after his typically masculine attitude toward the double standard of morality. His surrender is as graceful as he can make it.

Pedro de Cordoba, as Dr. Favel, resembles no physician of our acquaintance not even any physician summoned from the realms of imagination. He has, on the whole, a rather thankless task, for he must maintain theories shattered by almost every body else surrounding him. That is difficult, and unconvincing.

Quite a beam of sunlight is "Gerry" Duquesne, portrayed by Nana Bryant, who is light in her moods, thoroughly modern in her methods, and entirely effective in her own big scenes. One wondered at the unmistakable denseness of Freddy Spencer. But there are such men.

A. E. Anson's Carhart was tantalizingly perfect. As a scheming lawyer, he earned the detestation of his audience. He never overemphasized a single action which might destroy the picture he would leave. His is quite a triumph.

"Stepping Stones" is a stage sermon. It lacks the rant and hypocrisy of many pulpits, gaining in effectiveness by its quiet progression. Indeed, to moderns it is entirely true in many of its aspects. But why suggest that a latter-day audience possesses its own collection of skeletons.

HOBERT STAGES ANOTHER SUCCESS IN HIS "SONNY"

Emma Dunn, Lillian Lorraine and Robert Ames Are Hits.

The Selwyns presented Emma Dunn, Robert Ames, and Lillian Lorraine in "Sonny," a five-act comedy written by George V. Hobart, at the Belasco Theater last night.

THE CAST:

Buddie Hodges Chester Morris
Florence Crosby Pauline Garrow
Nora George Lawrence
Harper Helen Thompson
Mrs. Crosby Emma Dunn
Charles Crosby Robert Ames
Madge Craig Lillian Lorraine
Henry William H. Dupont
Jasper Walter Fredericks
Joe Marden Robert Ames
Alice Duval Lotus Robb
Rose Marie Renee Adore
Captain Duncan Will E. White
Gordon, an Orderly Charles Fearing
Rosemary Isabel Adams
Hank, the Gardener Donald Bayne

Someone in a tank town once said of a local performance of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" that the bloodhounds played very well, indeed, but lacked support. One might reverse this rural critic's opinion in reviewing the premiere of "Sonny" and say that the cast of this sentimental, wholesome comedy is well-nigh perfect, but lacks the support of a most refractory Alfrede in the crucial moments.

The story of the piece is one of a dutiful son (Robert Ames), who leaves his blind mother, as played by Emma Dunn, to go to the wars, and

who is "bumped off" after the Argentine show. At this point the highly versatile Mr. Ames becomes the buddy of the slain man, partner, goes home and fakes the role of son to the bereaved and blinded mother.

The fact that the buddy, Joseph Ames, is the living image of the slain man, the "Sonny" of the piece, is the main premise of the story.

The Selwyns have done well with the staging of the play. All the trappings of the late war-known war are ruthlessly dispensed with, and save for a fleeting glimpse into the corner of a ward in an A. E. F. hospital, the comedy has all of its action in the States.

Emma Dunn, as the mother, is so natural and so poised that she is convincingly real, even when plausibility becomes strained. Twice it falls to her lot to deliver a distinct shock to the audience, and in both cases her acting is superb.

Robert Ames, playing a dual role, bears a heavy burden of responsibility upon his capable shoulders. His humorous situations are naive and engaging, and he shows his wisdom in extracting long running ripples of amusement from his role rather than working toward a single Babylonian laugh at stated intervals, as is the fashion of most gentlemen indulging in light comedy.

Lillian Lorraine, the third co-star, is a sort of beloved-villainess, in a way, a "gold-digger" role with all the insight which her well-known services atop Mr. Zeigfeld's roof have given her. The fair Lillian is brief in her wit and her skirts, and her Ring Lardner dialogue is good.

Russell Medcraft, as a precocious youth, is cleverly played. Lotus Robb, as the heroine, makes the best of a rather stilted role. Pauline Garrow deserves mention for her work as the Little Sister of the returned soldier.

Mr. Hobart has an apparently highly impossible situation for the acting of this exceedingly well-played comedy, but no one doubts any coincidence with thousands of his historically true ones coming to life every day as the result of the late unpleasantness in Europe. The play drips with sentiment, which is a far better thing than having a comedy bulge with beds or "crooks" with "gats" and hard-hearted police inspectors.

The Selwyns have hung up another success.

LIVELY BURLESQUE AT GAYETY FOR THIS WEEK

There is something doing every minute in Jack Singer's latest burlesque show which is holding forth at the Gayety this week. "Vamping Tramp" is the title given to the two-act skit, and while it is absolutely devoid of any plot, the capable principals and the nifty chorus keep the show moving at high speed from the opening to the last song.

Harry Lander is the commander-in-chief of the fun brigade and his barrage of fun keeps the audience in an uproar all the time.

Then there is Amelia Pynes, a comely little blond lady, whose dancing has won her much fame among burlesque fans. Her vampire dance with Leo Daly was a gem.

Willie Lander, Bobby Moore, Henrietta Byron, Dolly Gordon, and Robert Miller are other members of the company who show ability.

An added attraction is Tarzan, the ape man or man ape, which was amusing in a number of tricks. Sam Wilson, a colored performer, sang a number of "blues" songs in Yiddish, which was a novelty to many.

"MEMORIES REVIVED" IS STYLE OF KEITH'S BILL

Keith's bill this week might have all been entitled "Memories Revived," for it harkens back to usages of other years—from the "cave man" conqueror of fair women to the group of songs by a veteran minstrel basso and his wife, the pair of them registering to the combined age of 144 years.

"The Honeymoon," a little comedy, was the top-line playlet by virtue of its mirth. William Gibson and Regina Connell had arrived at Niagara Falls on a very modern honeymoon, with Tootsie the poodle and all the modern woman's powers of spoiled oppression in evidence. And then "He" came into his own as that cherished memory the "Lord of Creation" in a cottage for two.

Joseph Norcross, assisted by Nellie Norcross, proved that the oldest living minstrel "in service" still has a rich voice and that there was humor and melody in that "Song Glimpse of Yesterday" when the old folks sang "When You and I Were Young, Maggie," and "Silver Threads Among the Gold."

A sweet-voiced singer, Yvette Rugel—whom the printer had underweighed in his adjective "miniature"—sang very delightfully songs that had won popular appeal in other days. Miss Rugel wandered effect.

(Continued on Page Seventeen.)

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THE EAGLE AMERICAN-CHINESE RESTAURANT

316 Ninth St. N. W. DANCE SALON NOW OPEN. Dinner Dances to 8:30 P. M. Supper Dances, 10:30 P. M. to 1:00 A. M. THOMAS JARDIN MUSIC. Business Lunch, 11:15 to 2 P. M. Special Dinner, 12:30 up to 8 P. M. Sunday Dinner, 11 A. M. to 8 P. M. Special attention given to after-theater parties. Telephone Franklin 7113.

TIMES "CRICKET" FINDS WARM TIME AT GARRICK

Thurston, Magician, Takes Live Rabbit From His Pocket.

"Dear Mr. Ashley: "When you gave me that pass to the Shubert-Garrick and told me to cover Thurston's show on its second week's run, I was glad because I knew it was "Shrine night," and that "Henry Lansburgh and his Almas Temple nobles would be there in full array. I had a suspicion too that Noble Thurston would do a few of his little tricks on Henry and he did, but I never suspected for a moment that he was going to pick on your critic the way he did."

"I was sitting there in B1 with no thought of danger in my mind when that man Thurston came down, stuck his hand down my coat collar and pulled a live colored rabbit which I am positive were not there when I left home—there were miles of them!"

"Then, as though he thought that were not enough, he told my innocent little five-year-old daughter that I also had a rabbit down my back and told her to pull it out by the ears, which she did, much to my personal embarrassment, because I do not feel that that was a good example for a growing child."

"He said she could keep it if she would tell him what she would name it, so she said she would call it "Henry," after Mr. Henry Lansburgh, and then a man behind me whispered to his lady friend that I was in the show—and I suppose I was, for that matter, but not the way he meant."

"Oh, yes, Thurston did a lot of tricks in which I did not participate, like the levitation act, making a girl disappear and then finding that she was hiding in a trunk suspended from the top of the auditorium by a rope and discovering a rooster and a pack of cards concealed in Henry Lansburgh's coat—Henry doesn't play cards—but I can't remember them all, for I lost my program when he pulled the rabbit out of my coat. It was a fine show, outside of that."

"But, Mr. Ashley, I do not think it is right to treat a poor newspaper man like that, and I think you should write to the manager of the Shubert-Garrick and tell him your critics must not be interfered with like that. Suppose I should be there next week and Hamlet would come down and take Yorick's skull from my pocket. It ought not be allowed, and I hope you will take action."

"Yours, very truly,"

"P. S.—My little girl says Mr. Thurston is a mean, old thing, because after he gave her the rabbit, he sent an usher down to take it away from her, after the show was over."

TO PUBLISH LETTERS OF CHARLES DICKENS

LONDON, Oct. 12.—A valuable collection of unpublished letters and manuscripts of Charles Dickens is on its way to the printer's.

They had hitherto been in private hands but are now to be published in book form.

SHUBERT-BELASCO Direction Messrs. Shubert

Tonight 8:20—Mat. Tomorrow, 2:20

The Selwyns Present GEORGE V. HOBART'S "COMEDY OF YOUTH"

Incidental Songs by Raymond Hubbard with Emma Dunn Robert Ames Lillian Lorraine

NEXT WEEK: DAVID WARFIELD in "The Return of Peter Grimm."

SHUBERT-GARRICK Direction Messrs. Shubert

Tonight—Mat. Thur. and Sat. THE WONDER SHOW OF THE UNIVERSE!

THE GREAT MAGICIAN ALL NEW Prices, 50-1.00-1.50. Mats. 25-50-75-1.00 Next Week, WALTER HAMPTON

NATIONAL Tonight, 8:20 Wed. Mats. Sat.

HENRY MILLER'S THEATRE COMPANY in "STEPPING STONES" By Louis K. Anspacher.

Starting Sunday, Oct. 17—Seats Thursday.

GEO. M. COHAN'S Production of the Big Dramatic Hit, THE ACQUITTAL With WILLIAM HARRIGAN, CHRYSTAL HERNE, GEORGE PARSONS.

GAYETY—Ninth Below F

ALL THIS WEEK—MATINEE DAILY.

Jack Singer Show

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B.F. KEITH'S 25c DAILY 2:15 SUN. 3:00 HOL'YS 2:00, 5:00 5:15 Seats at 25c Daily Mats.

JOHN HYAMS & LELA MCINTYRE In Their Delicious "MAYBLADE" KATE ELINORE & SAM WILLIAMS Advertising "Wanted a Cook."

YVETTE RUGEL, Wm. I. GIBSON & REGINA CONNELL, CHARLES E. IRWIN, Morris & Campbell, Mr. & Mrs. J. M. Norcross, Four Lamy Bros., Muldoon, Franklin & Rose, Other Attractions.

FOLLY Today, 2:15 Tonight 8:15 MISCHIEFMAKERS World Series-Electric Scoreboard Wrestling Tonight After "Show" TURNER vs. DALLAS Telephone Franklin 7113.

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CRANDALL'S METROPOLITAN F ST. AT TENTH FOR THE FIRST TIME ON ANY SCREEN IN THE WORLD, LOUIS B. MAYER THIS WEEK PRESENTS A Masterpiece

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LOEW'S COLUMBIA NOW PLAYING THE GREAT REDEEMER WITH HOUSE PETERS & MARJORIE DAW EXTRA ADDED FEATURE BUSTER KEATON In His First Comedy ONE WEEK

LOEW'S PALACE Continuous, 10:30 a.m.—11 p.m. TODAY AND ALL WEEK BERT LYTELL IN 'The Price of Redemption' Overture, 'Naughty Marietta' OTHER PROGRAM HITS

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CRANDALL'S KNICKBOCKER 18th and Col. Rd. Today, Beginning at 6:30 ANNETTE KELLERMAN In a Mile-a-Minute Comedy-Drama WHAT WOMEN LOVE Comedy, "An Overall Hero"

World Brotherhood Congress CLOSING MEETING Wednesday Night, Oct. 13—7:30. Memorial Continental Hall of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Seventeenth street. William Jennings Bryan and Rev. Samuel W. Hughes London, England. SUBJECT: World Brotherhood and World Peace Admission by ticket which can be secured at First Congregational Church of 827 Woodward Building or at the door.

POLI'S TONIGHT AT 8:20 Shubert Attractions, and Sat. THE SELWYN'S PRESENT Charles Virginia Lawrence KIN O'BRIEN WHEAT In the Merry Musical Play "BUDDIES" Laughs Galore; Songs a Plenty Beginning Next Sunday Night. SEATS NOW A. H. WOODS Presents

FLORENCE MOORE IN BREAKFAST IN BED It's a Scram. Prices, 50c to \$2.00 T. ARTHUR SMITH, 1506 G St. N. W. for N. Y. Symphony Orchestra WALTER DAMROSCH, Conductor. 5 Afternoons, 4:30—Oct. 24, Nov. 23, Dec. 18, Jan. 18, Feb. 24. Soloists: Fritz Kreisler, Frieda Hempel, Sergei Rachmaninoff. Tickets—\$12.00, \$10.00, \$7.50, \$5.00, \$3.75.

TEN STAR SERIES TEN FRIDAYS—4:30 WITH Ysaye, Tarasova, Anna Case, Thelma Given, Pablo Casals, Dignit Engell, Josef Stopak, Alfred Cortot, Olga Samaroff, Marguerite Matzenauer. TEN CONCERTS FOR TEN DOLLARS Mmc. Schumann-Heink Friday, 4:30, Oct. 22—Tickets: \$2.50, \$2.00, \$1.50, \$1.00.

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA PIERRE MONTEUX, Conductor. NATIONAL—FIVE TUESDAYS AT 4:30. Nov. 2, Nov. 30 Jan. 4, Feb. 1, March 14. SOLOISTS—HELEN STANLEY, Soprano; JEAN REDYFF, Violin; ALFRED CORTOT, Piano; HILDA LASHANSKA, Soprano; ERNO DORNANYI, Piano. Season tickets, \$12.50, \$10.00, \$7.50, \$5.00. Now on sale at Mrs. Greene's Concert Bureau, Droop's, 12th & G.

ARTISTS' GORSE National Nov. 12—MARTY GARDNER, Soprano; Dec. 5—SOPHIE BRARIAL, Contralto; Jan. 12—JAN RUBEK, Violinist; Feb. 12—CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, Frederick Stock, Conductor; soloist, MAGGIE TETTE. March 2—FALSA, Contralto; April 12—HAUER, Pianist; JACQUES THIBAUD. Season Tickets Now on Sale at Mrs. Greene's Concert Bureau, Droop's, 12th & G.